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PROVERBIAL SNOPESTORY*

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"Yes, we all knew that; that was a part of our folklore, or Snopeslore, if you like," thinks Gavin Stevens with exasperation while recounting some lore about the Snopes family, in William Faulkner's The Town.¹ As readers of Faulkner's novels know, Snopeslore plays a most important part in the Yoknapatawpha legend. Two of the novels, The Hamlet and The Town, are almost entirely devoted to treating the shenanigans of the Snopeses, and in particular the ruthless self-advancement by fraud and guile of the amoral Flem Snopes to powerful and responsible positions in Yoknapatawpha County. Not only did Flem have to outwit and climb over entrenched families, such as the Sartoris, Stevens, De Spain, and Varner, but occasionally he also had to out-Snopes other Snopeses who were on the business make.

Here, I wish to call attention to only one aspect of Snopeslore--the distorted and disparate proverbial statements by I. O. Snopes, together with the mimicking of his garblings by Ratliff, the sewing-machine salesman, the natural enemy of everything that even smells of a Snopes.³ I. O., according to Ratliff in The Town, p. 242, was "so full of mixed-up proverbs that you stayed so busy trying to unravel just which of two or three proverbs he had jumbled together that you couldn't even tell just exactly what lie he had told you until it was already too late." And when the reader happens upon such maundering confusion as "Want that horse shod, hey? Good, good: save the hoof and save all. Good looking animal. Seen a considerable better one in a field a piece back. But no matter; love me, love my horse, beggars can't be choosers, if wishes was horseflesh we'd all own thoroughbreds" (The Hamlet, p. 64), he believes exactly what Ratliff says, forgetting, or not needing to know, why Faulkner chose to portray I. O. in such an annoying and mechanical way.

*I am indebted to Professor William J. Griffin for many of the ideas presented here. Although I must take responsibility for the wording of the article, it could not have been written in its present form without his aid and pertinent comments.

1. (New York: Random House, 1957), p. 146.
2. (New York: Random House, 1940).
3. For those interested in examining in more detail the passages on which this paper is based, I have listed the applicable page numbers in the two novels:

The Hamlet: 63-66, 163-64, 202-207, 270-71, and 327.

The Town: 36, and 231-56.

I. O. found himself crosswise Flem Snopes' ambitions, and for his "sin" he was exiled. I. O., however, happens to be one of Faulkner's more exciting characters from the point of view of Snopeslore. He first appears merely as "Snopes" in the short story, "Mule in the Yard,"⁴ where he is a muletrader whose mules had a habit of standing in the path of fast freight trains. I. O. collected the damages. The short story, changed substantially, becomes a central incident in The Town. In The Hamlet, I. O. emerges as a developed minor character with personality traits that immediately make him memorable.

I. O. is "a frail man none of whose garments seemed to belong to him, with a talkative weasel's face." His voice is "volute and rapid and meaningless like something talking about itself in a deserted cavern." (The Hamlet, pp. 63-64, 65.) A jack-of-all-trades, he was a wrong-headed animal in each. For a recapitulation of his career and personality, I quote from The Town, p. 36:

... the next one after Eck behind the restaurant counter was I. O., the blacksmith-cum-schoolmaster-cum-bigamist, or multiplied by bigamy--a thin undersize voluble weasel-faced man talking constantly in a steady stream of worn saws and proverbs usually having no connection with one another nor application to anything else.

I. O., unlike Flem, was diffuse, erratic, and fragmented. He participated in too many occupations, mostly on a horizontal line, whereas Flem moved vertically, with Snopesian efficiency and obduracy, to positions of high eminence.

In the Faulkner canon the Snopes clan represents the debased modern world of crass commercialism and self-interest, a world characterized by lack of meaning, whether that meaning is religious, political, or social. Creatures of no principle, the Snopeses enervate the community around them, since they compete under no known rule or convention of society, commit all the fallacies, and mock all the rituals of civilization. A rational community can only look on in helpless astonishment, tempered by amusement, at the predatory antics of the satanic Snopeses. Doing ill seems to be the sole delight of the practitioners of Snopesism.

Because I. O. is one of the new men, one of the exploiters and violators, in the South, Faulkner treats him ironically. I. O., a schoolmaster, is Faulkner's dramatic portrayal of the debasement of learning, or at least the modern corruption of learning. I. O. has only half-learned what he has read; his learning is rote, and has not permeated him. But it is a handy tool to have around, to confuse people with, a sort of crutch to take the place of conventional communication.

4. Collected Stories of William Faulkner (New York: Random House, 1943), pp. 249-64.

The following exchange between Ratliff and I. O. indicates how I. O. recalls bits of his reading to form an almost nonsensical mosaic of Biblical quotation and traditional maxims. The conversation concerns Ike's love affair with the cow—said by one critic to be Faulkner's treatment of the Paris and Helen mythological affair in modern terms⁵—in which I. O. takes a perverse interest, directed especially at the peeping-toms gathered around the cracks in the barn to watch Ike consorting with the cow:

"No," Ratliff said harshly. "Not me. But I aim to do this much. I am going to stay here until I see if his folks are doing something about it. About letting them folks hang around that crack and watch, anyhow."

"Sholy," Snopes said, "That ere wont do. That's it. Flesh is weak, and it wants but little here below. Because sin's in the eye of the beholder; cast the beam outen your neighbors' eye and out of sight is out of mind. A man cant have his good name drug in alleys. The Snopes name has done held its head up too long in this country to have no such reproaches against it like stock-diddling." (The Hamlet, p. 204.)

The passage affords both an excuse for Ike's actions and a defense of the Snopes clan. The garbling and transformation of original quotations, particularly from Christ's remarks (Matthew, vii, 3-5, and Matthew, xxvi, 41), heighten the incongruity. The blame is placed on the watchers, where to some extent it certainly belongs. Applying devious logic, I. O. points out that evil does not exist except in the mind. In addition, the "good" Snopes name must not be given to those who have sexual relations with cows, at least at a time when I. O. is coveting the position of schoolmaster.

On the plot level, Faulkner exploits the counterfeit schoolmaster motif by contrasting the "learned" man in the Snopes world with the learned humanist in the traditional society. I. O. Snopes and Gavin Stevens represent bookish intelligences in two different worlds, I. O. the misapplied, mechanical intellect, Stevens the finely tuned instrument of humanistic education. Snopes, the "proverbial feller," has only the outward trappings of the schoolmaster. In The Hamlet, p. 203, Ratliff found I. O. holding a book and wearing spectacles, and with a frock coat nearby—all symbols of the scholar and teacher. When Ratliff explained his errand (to get someone to do something about stopping Ike's sodomy performance), I. O.

finished getting into the coat, buttoning it hurriedly about the paper dickey he wore in place of a shirt (the cuffs were attached to the coat sleeves themselves) then removing the spectacles with the same flushed haste, as he had hurried into the coat in order to remove the spectacles, so that for that reason Ratliff noticed that the frames had no lenses in them.

5. Irving Malin, William Faulkner: An Interpretation (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1957), p. 88.

Although I. O. is intelligent, the intelligence is completely divorced from body. It is an aura that merely hangs about I. O., never really becoming vital and meaningful to the community he is supposed to serve.

Another aspect of characterization is gained by the blending of proverbs, maxims, and Biblical passages. As an example, a passage from The Town, pp. 253-54, is quoted:

. . . cash on the barrelhead is the courtesy of kings, as the feller says, not to mention the fact that beggars' choices aint even choices when he aint even got a roof to lay his head in no more. And if Lawyer Stevens has got ara thing loose about him the vice presi-dent might a taken a notion to, he better hold onto it since as the feller says even a fool wont tread where he jest got through watching somebody else get bit.

The blending and juxtaposition of clichés and proverbs here are not blatant examples of the author's license. On the contrary, they show how I. O. draws fragments from his reading to describe his troubles. He wants to obtain one hundred and fifty dollars from Flem, who certainly is not going to give it to him, but I. O. is grasping at straws. In this internecine conflict, Flem holds the upper hand, and can afford to pay in cash, but will not. I. O., now the beggar, really has no choice, and in his self-pity, he recalls Christ's words, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man has nowhere to lay his head" (Matthew, viii, 20, or Luke, ix, 58). Fantastic as it may sound, I. O. identifies himself with Christ.

Through a series of fragments and referents--"cash," "courtesy of kings," "beggars," and "Christ"--I. O. telescopes his present poverty ironically in contrast to Flem's fortunate position. He also realizes that, since Flem has no other principle than self-interest, he can look for no relief. And furthermore, the parallel with the selfless martyrdom of Christ pushes I. O. into a selfless act. He has the altruistic intelligence--or is it for purposes of vengeance?--to warn Gavin Stevens, through the "proverbial feller," that he had better beware of Flem. Stevens, in the almost untenable position of acting as Flem's lawyer, has just witnessed I. O.'s misfortune. Fools may rush in where angels fear to tread, but no fool will tread in the place where he just saw the snake bite someone else. And I. O. has been well bitten.

Any one of several passages would serve to illustrate the proverb-associative qualities of I. O.'s speech. The context of the following quotation is I. O.'s sudden titillation at the show in progress in which the country gallants watch Ike and the cow:

"Aint he a sight now?" Snopes cackled, chortled. "I done often thought, since Houston give him that cow and Mrs. Littlejohn located them in that handy stall, what a shame it is some of his folks aint running for office. Bread and circuses, as the fellow says, makes hay at the poll-box . . ." (The Hamlet, p. 203.)

This seems to be Faulkner's way of representing the Snopesian doctrine of elections and their attendant publicity, or perhaps Faulkner's comment on the coarse exhibitionism that usually surrounds modern elections.

And so it is, except that the tags suggest much more. The "intraverbal" matrix of "bread," "circuses," "hay," and "poll-box," forms a pattern that probably does typify the modern election. But the author also comments in a prologue to I. O.'s outburst. In the prologue, Ike's show is called a "crass Roman holiday of rationalised curiosity." Faulkner has evoked a contrast between the patriotic Roman holiday, along with the heroic and epic combats that took place in the arena, and the modern vulgar counterpart. Here the arena is Mrs. Littlejohn's stable; the spectators are ribald peeping-toms; and the show is a veritable perversion of all spectacles--the copulation of Ike with his beloved cow.⁶

While retaining the structure of the traditional proverb, I. O. manages to twist the meaning by substituting within the structure, as well as blending. Some of his new meanings in the old structures run as follows:

"... all pleasure and no work, as the fellow says, might make Jack so sharp he might cut his self." (The Hamlet, p. 66.)

"... justice is the right man's bread but poison for the evil man if you give it time." (The Hamlet, p. 163.)

"... she would find she never had no shirt nor britches left neither by the time she got home, since a stitch in time saves nine lives for even a cat, as the feller says. Not to mention the fact that when you dines in Rome you durn sho better watch your overcoat." (The Town, p. 248.)

The verbal foil to I. O. is Ratliff, who is personally affronted by the Snopeses. Ratliff's mimicking points up the amoral and devious use that I. O. has made of didactic and moralistic material. The chain of Snopeses moves up from the Varner farm--it seems that all evil in the community originates on the Varner farm--to the town, and, according to I. O., "a chain aint no stronger than its weakest link." (The Hamlet, p. 66). But Ratliff is more concrete and concise when he says, "Snopes can come and Snopes can go, but Will Varner looks like he is fixing to snopes forever. Or Varner will Snopes forever--take your pick."⁷ (The Hamlet, p. 164.)

6. It may be a coincidence that the Oxford Dictionary of English Proverbs credits the first occurrence of "Bread and circus" in print to Juvenal, Sat. 10. 80.

7. Cf. Tennyson, "The Song of the Brook": "For men may come and men may go, / But I go on for ever."

When Eck Snopes moves into the newly Snopes-vacated slot as blacksmith on the Varner farm, I. O. excuses Eck's ineptness by saying, "But it's the old shop, the old stand; just a new broom in it." (The Hamlet, p. 64.) Ratliff's corrosive comment later when Lump Snopes becomes Varner's store clerk is "the old job at the old stand, maybe a new fellow doing the jobbing but it's the same old stern getting reamed out." (The Hamlet, p. 164.) The barb is directed at Will Varner, who will continue to be victimized by the Snopes clan.

I. O. Snopes never uses a pun, but Ratliff knows the ironic value of the pun; and all his puns point toward the problem that Varner and the community has with the Snopeses

"Big ears have little pitchers, the world beats a track to the rich man's hog-pen but it ain't every family has a new lawyer, not to mention a prophet. Waste not, want not, except that a full waist don't need no prophet to prophesy a profit and just whose." (The Hamlet, p. 164.)

The passage begins with a reference to the eavesdropping done by Lump; then the reference is to Varner's being exploited by the Snopeses, but by implication it also alludes to the marriage of Eula and Flem. Next, the pun begins to work with I. O. as the point, I. O. being a spurious lawyer and a sham prophet. Image and idea lead into image and idea until prophecy, profit, pregnancy, waste, and waist mingle into an obscene image of commercialism and raw sexuality, both descriptive of the new clerk, Lump Snopes, who is a lecher, and who rips the board from the barn so that the loafers can watch Ike and the cow. Ratliff carries out his obscene image by projecting a picture of Lump's treatment of the female field hand who will come into the store for a small amount of lard.

I. O.'s proverbial expressions have meaning in the Snopesian context, and generally apply only to momentary Snopesian logic. I. O. does not think, he speaks. And when he speaks, the pertinent fragments click into place. When the situation changes, the set of proverbs changes to conform to the new line. On the other hand, Ratliff is a thinker, the choral voice, whose parodies, always ironic and subtle, have objective meaning in the context of evil that the Snopeses have injected into Frenchman's Bend.

Several reasons can be suggested as to why Faulkner portrays I. O. as he does. Characters like I. O. certainly exist, and not only in Northern Mississippi. Always ready to give proverbial counsel, they are usually pretentiously half-literate, well-versed in Poor Richard sententiousness and in Biblical quotations. Such a character is an excellent foil to the educated Gavin Stevens. I. O.'s speech, including as it does proverbial Spoonerisms, associative tags, blending of image, proverb, and idea, rearranging of proverb units, and segmentation of speech units, illuminates the Snopesian creed. The items constitute the Machiavellian handbook lore of the Snopes clan. In addition, they enrich the text for the reader who can recall the original quotation, whether literary or folk, and who can make the necessary contrasts between what was and what is.

Of interest to the folklorist is Faulkner's artistic manipulation of folk materials, not only here but also elsewhere. While making fertile use of provincial and folk materials, he has somehow managed to universalize them and make them enduring. Proverbial Snopeslore is one more instance of Faulkner's exploitation of the folk idiom and "culture" for imaginative purposes.

HEARD IN THE SOUTH

By

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Three studies of Southern speech deserve attention because one of them gives a good view of the past and the other two will give an equally good view of the present. It may seem capricious upon second thought to choose the latter two since neither is complete. But I believe that a case can be made for their importance and I will attempt that later on. As for the first, there can be no doubt of its worth.

This first study is Norman E. Eliason's investigation of North Carolina speech, published in 1956 as Tarheel Talk. It is a book in which we find a description of English language patterns in North Carolina between 1750 and 1860. The evidence for these patterns comes from the language of letters, diaries, account books, church records, and other manuscript material in the Southern Historical Collection of the University of North Carolina. In one sense, the use of documents as the source of linguistic analysis is not new; many scholars have chosen to use this procedure in the past. But in another sense, Tarheel Talk is the outcome of an undertaking which is unique. As Eliason stated it:

There is no comparable study to use as a guide / in selecting and rejecting evidence /, for, so far as I am aware, no one else has tried to survey so large a body of manuscript material with quite the same purpose in mind that I have had. (p. vi)

This purpose, suggested on another page, was and is to describe the way in which features common to general English, to American English, and to Southern English have been combined and distributed in North Carolinian usage.

Tarheel Talk, then, is an informative account of language attitudes, of vocabulary and pronunciation, and of grammar as found in North Carolina between the Revolutionary

and Civil Wars. These limitations in period of time need explaining. They come generally from the nature of the evidence itself. The dates of the earliest documents provide a starting point. The abundance of material itself, especially of North Carolina evidence, indicated that the wise analyst would limit himself to the documents from that one state. The choice of the ending date came from Eliason's certainty that in living persons he could find the best sources of evidence for language patterns which had developed since the Civil War.

This book places North Carolina English in its setting as a part of the general stream of English, describes North Carolinian attitudes and customs, and illustrates its points with many examples from the documents. Admittedly all of this discussion of language history could be very technical, but Eliason has chosen to phrase it in such a way as to be interesting and clear to intelligent readers. On the grounds of interest, readers should welcome it. On the grounds that it adds considerably to our understanding of the English language in the southern part of our country, readers should choose to study it carefully. In addition to these matters, folklorists will find the book worth while for other reasons. One such reason is that passages are quoted in it which give incidental evidence of folk belief and custom. General Lenoir, for instance, wrote in his distilling book (1808): "A man Blowing his Breath thro his nose in a hhd. of Beer after it is done working will set it working again--but a Womans Breath will stop it...." (Eliason, p. 36) It may not seem proper to send the ladies off to read books on brewing; at the same time the quoted sentence hints that somewhere there must be passages on the folklore of a man's fatal breath.

Tarheel Talk is admirable in many ways. Not the least of these for linguist and folklorist is the presence of two appendices and index. All three relate to the words cited in the book. The first appendix is one of word usages, the second of significant spellings, and the index is of words not listed in either appendix. A person wishing to know something of the changes in meaning associated with pert might consult the appendix of usages to his advantage. The word pertly appears there (p. 287) followed by the explanatory synonym promptly. After that is a reference to pages in the body of the text where further discussion occurs. Next is an illustrative quotation: "We expected ma purtly today." And then the documentary source is given for the quotation: its date, its author, its county as bounded today, and its place in the Southern Historical Collection. As for significant spellings, the documentation for them is not so elaborate but it is sufficient. Thus creek has the spelling crick in 1787 in Stokes county and in New Hanover county, in 1792 in Lincoln county; the spelling (and pronunciation) creak appears in 1857 in Washington county, the sole entry. The worth of this sort of information to professionals and interested amateurs is considerable.

Such knowledge can serve as an end in itself, delighting the finder or the user. But many persons believe that information should in some measure help us see connections between the present and the past. Tarheel Talk can be read for that purpose too. Our awareness of the vagaries of Americanisms is sharpened by the discussion of special senses of words not found in historical dictionaries but at the same time once current in North Carolina. Or it may be that we are surprised to see frank take on special political

meanings as in Congressman DeBerry's note of 1830 that there was "a letter . . . which I franked and sent." (p. 272) It is a use not noted in A Dictionary of Americanisms.

At other times we see an issue more complex than the increasing of vocabulary or the change of meanings. One instance will serve, an instance most appropriate for persons who in the mid-twentieth century are making wild remarks about public education. A letter, written in 1790, from young W. Lenoir to his father gives us at least one view of academic life a century and a half ago. This is what he wrote in part:

I have got over the Grammar once and are Now a Revising it. I think it come on slo but shore but I am still in hopes that I shall Learn Tolerable well the Teacher is a going home and ant a Comeing back (p. 62)

Yesterday's student and today's have much the same kind of problem. Usages known to young Lenoir and his contemporaries are still with us. Ant (or aint) is alive and proscribed, tolerable well has its defenders who elevate it to tolerably well along with slowly but surely from slo but shore, and got or gotten will be a matter of debate for years to come. In the spoken dialect of the purer purists we hear the intrusive a- before coming and going; even the most precise speaker introduces a glide to get him from the pt to the g sound in We kept going. All of which simply suggests that in W. Lenoir's comments we see something of our present difficulty, something of our attitude toward the value and the result of grammar study. Today, as then, teacher is going home and ant a comeing back.

We may hope that Tarheel Talk excites others to study the linguistic evidence in the early documents of their locality. For the South, the Southern Historical Collection is good; its excellence should not lead us to ignore the similar resources in our local archives. And it might be well for the Bulletin from time to time to publish brief descriptions of local collections of documents. The description should be keyed to the interests of this society. That is, aside from having comments on those things which are of special value to the person describing it, the description should give the name of the collection, its location, any arrangements needed in order to use it, the approximate number of items, the kinds of items (letters, account books, church records, diaries), the inclusive dates of the items, and brief characteristic quotations from the documents. A comment on language and on folklore traits of typical documents would be most helpful.

So much for this published study. We may now turn to the other two, beginning with the one that is on its way toward completion. This study is an investigation of distinctive vocabulary patterns in the South. As a part of the larger word geography of the United States and Canada it is an attempt to locate and map the occurrence of selected words in the vocabularies of native Southerners. The procedure currently used is that of the postal questionnaire.

Before we go too far in the discussion, a historical note may be useful. About two years ago the present writer, as a member of the American Dialect Society, was

appointed regional secretary for the central South. One obvious thing needed to be done: complete the atlas survey in his area. At a meeting in November, 1957, interested persons agreed that the swiftest and least costly way to explore the area was by questionnaire mailed to selected, representative informants. Since field surveys had already been made in Kentucky, in a part of Georgia, in South Carolina, Louisiana, and Texas, it would be a duplication of effort to make a postal survey as well; only a few questionnaires would be needed in those states, serving as a kind of link with the field survey and as a control for interpreting the results gained by correspondence. For the other states--Missouri, Arkansas, Tennessee, Mississippi, and Oklahoma--a close meshed postal survey would be required. Those present hoped that responses would come in from properly selected representatives of each county in those states. Since that meeting, the actual work of collecting has gone at varying speeds. At the moment, for instance, we need volunteers in Mississippi and Missouri who will put the questionnaires into the hands of good informants. Any reader wishing to help in this distribution is asked to write to me at the University of Chattanooga.

During the fall and spring I have conducted the postal questionnaire in Tennessee. Thanks to the help of friends on other faculties, I have responses from nearly every county. The collected and unprocessed evidence is impressively bulky. Random sampling has persuaded me that it is good. Informants have generously given of their time to encircle their own usages in a list of more than one hundred forty groups of usages. Where nothing in my list corresponded to their language, they have written their own word choices in the margin of the questionnaire. One man, for instance, encircled his use in the list andirons, dogs, dog irons, firedogs, fire irons, hand irons, log irons, and then wrote the additional word wood irons. This usage, from Hamilton county, Tennessee, is the first instance I have noticed of it in these questionnaire answers. At the moment it is unique; at least it is not recorded in A Dictionary of Americanisms or in Wentworth's American Dialect Dictionary. The logic of the form is easy to discover. And probably it has a wide, though hitherto uncharted, distribution. Doubtless some of the readers of this article have it as a part of their own vocabularies or know of it in the vocabularies of their neighbors. We shall return to it later.

The same Hamilton county informant encircled window shades and window blinds, adding a note that the latter was the name of things fastened to the outside of the house. If I understand him, his window blinds stands for the same thing that shutters does in my vocabulary. And in the entry on names of wood used to start a fire he wrote rich pine, adding that kindling was a more recent term which had replaced it in his locality. All of which does not lead to the conclusion that the postal questionnaire provides the wrong kind of test for the vocabulary of a community. In point of fact, the questionnaire seems to give quite reliable results. Where the questionnaire has been tested against other ways of discovering local word choice, its results have closely corresponded with the results gained by the other methods. But its chief purpose is to enable us quickly to discover large areas of similar usages. Once those have been established, then other procedures can be used to discover finer distinctions within the big areas.

It is the hope of the group working on this problem that we will have assembled and interpreted the better part of this evidence by November 1958. Certainly the Tennessee and Arkansas maps will be completed during the current summer if no untoward event interferes. So many ifs go with the other state projects that it would be absurd to discuss their immediate outcome. In the long range scheme their reports will appear; we are sure of it.

We may turn now to the third major study. In making this shift, we are in effect moving from a study of the surface to a study of the interior, from geography to stratigraphy. But this exploration of the layers of language will probably be better because our geographical work establishes the limits of areas of dialect difference; it points to the places where explorations in depth should be the most informative.

The procedures for exploring the levels of English language usage are still in the formative stage. The Usage Committee of the American Dialect Society has long been charged with the task of describing "those structural elements in all dialects of American English in which variation occurs." And such a description obviously would not want to reassemble those distinctions which the dialect geographers had already noted, though it might use elements of the description as starting points in its exploration of usage levels. Under the chairmanship of Kelsie Harder of Youngstown University, a contributor to past issues of TFS Bulletin, the committee has been actively trying to devise ways of discovering these variant elements which set one level off from the next.

The problem of identifying the levels of usage is complex; if only it were possible to be as certain of these things as editors of dictionaries are. But let us suppose that we have successfully penetrated the language strata of a locality and have brought up a nice core which displays each level beside its neighbors. The levels might have this set of labels:

Educated Usage
Old Fashioned Usage
Newfangled Usage
Men's Language
Women's Language

Children's Language
Rural Usage
Urban Usage
Uneducated Usage

Agreed that the labels educated and uneducated are not satisfactory even though widely familiar, still the substitutes such as cultivated and crude do not seem to be a marked improvement. Even the word vulgate does not serve well as a term for the ordinary speech of people at their daily tasks; it is too close to the disapproving word vulgar. For the moment, however, those layers must suggest what the core would be like. But a core as a fixed, solidified thing must misrepresent the actuality. Rural shifts to urban, urban to old fashioned, uneducated to educated and so on; and these in turn shift as children become young adults and then grow on to old age. Somehow the direction of shift must be discovered.

The core must be self classifying. It cannot be judged by standards set by outsiders, but rather must reflect the community's views of its own speech. It must demonstrate that in the community view certain choices of words stand for the ways of men and women of distinction; certain other pronunciations and choices of words stand for riffraff. The stage struck young person may try to imitate British upper class speech as he imagines it; his imitation may become so false that his neighbors laugh at him. A person from another group may feel that the language of local important persons is too highfalutin, too citified. His attitude when made known to these leaders may cause them to choose homely language; we have all heard bankers, ministers, teachers, and visiting dignitaries try to speak like the boys in the backroom. With all these shifting details, we must discover a means of recognizing what they are and where they may move in the local scale of values.

It may be no more difficult problem than that of distinguishing men's language from women's. The reader will surely recognize which sex would say "Here is that hateful old street corner I told you about." That is women's language, though how one tests the truth of that assertion is uncertain. From subjective impressions, I would say that no man would use hateful that way. It may be even that hateful is a part of a man's recognition vocabulary but not of his active usage. From other points of view, we could consider that this word would be a test word for evidence of archaic and local levels in the vocabulary of a given place. But how to get it spontaneously from the informant, that is a troublesome question. If a true test of women's language is difficult to prepare, one for men's language is not so. At least not so in its more general practices; the problem lies in discovering the extreme local limits. Illustrating men's language is not easy if one observes taboos. A negative instance will have to serve us. Early in the 1958 baseball season, sports writers described one rookie as a fiercely competitive player who at the same time was a wholesome young man, teaching Sunday school and setting other examples of good conduct. One sign of his propriety was his saying that it took "intestinal fortitude" to win the place he held on the ball team. Rough, tough men would say that "it took guts," but not so a young player who wanted to be wholesome. By implication his choice of words moved him up above his crude companions; the reporters gave us none of the comments of his teammates. Possibly they thought his choice a bit prettified. Persons of a different degree of sophistication in language might view "intestinal fortitude" with amusement, seeing it as a mistaken attempt to move beyond one's humble beginnings. To them it is as absurdly pretentious as "expedite" for "do it now." By their standard "guts" is to be preferred for its honest.

This brings us to the complications of educated and overeducated, or hyperurban, usage. The extreme care with which the hyperurban pronounces potatoes results in bow day doze or something like it. The pronunciation illustrates an ideal of elegance toward which some persons attempt to move. And this ideal must have its place in our scheme of usage analysis. But perhaps it is not this extreme which is so significant as is the more nearly central pattern of each usage class--for example, the college trained group. This pattern may be one that the group denies following, even rejects in theory, and yet in actually uses from day to day. In blunders which I find in the papers of college students I see evidence of what they and I hear from the lips of local

important personages. For instance, in parts of the South d sounds and t sounds are close to each other. These recent misspellings appear to come from the similarities in those sounds:

A man high on the latter of social standing
 Somewhat self conceided
 She was use to extravagant living
 Got along find with other persons
 His keen eyesight help him spot fish /total loss of the sound /

Further instances of confusion appear to come from a conflict between what is heard in the community and what is taught in school. I recently read "have to drownd his sorrows" in a student paper. Here with the battle against drownded we have total victory for drowned, probably through school drill on the parts of the verb drown. In the sentence "He is discussed with everything" we have the substitution of discussed for disgusted. Possibly this is simple muddling since the two words sound roughly alike. Perhaps, though, disgusted begins to sound forbidden by its similarity to the forbidden busted. As for "the sea horse casted in bronze" and the "towers equipted with radar" the reader may decide whether too much or too little education produces such words.

Along with this group of differences, we have another source of difficulty arising from a shift in the patterns which a local speaker knows. For every speaker, surely, his language is stable; the language about him is what changes. To the man mentioned some paragraphs back, the expressions wood irons, window shades, and rich pine were the accepted usages; so far as he is concerned, andirons, shutters, and kindling are newfangled intruders in the vocabulary of the community. It is wholly possible that his usage is exceptional; he may have a language pattern which for all practical purposes is limited to his immediate family. If we by chance select his vocabulary to serve in establishing the range of usages in the community, we may seriously misrepresent the actual picture.

If the Usage Committee is very lucky it will devise a test which will be short, easy to administer, and foolproof in its results. That test, given anywhere in the United States, will show a true cross-section of the levels of community usage. Further, if administered in the same community again after twenty-five years have passed, it will show positively any change in standing of expressions that has occurred in the period. The members of the committee doubt that its luck can be that good. At the same time they would like to know what expressions folklorists hear that might possibly be used as test words or phrases. Having already established their acquaintance with ballad singers and tall tale tellers, folklorists might ask them to talk about the words which show that a person is from the city or the country, well-to-do or poor, over-educated, educated, or uneducated, and so on. Those observations sent to Professor Harder or to me will be doubly welcome. We believe that the time is right for developing standards of usage by measured observation rather than by editorial whim.

SOME FOLKTALES FROM NEGRO COLLEGE STUDENTS

By

Dazzie Lee Jones
Memphis, Tennessee

That folktales are told by American Negroes in remote rural areas is well known to people who have even a casual knowledge of folklore. That storytelling is a very lively tradition among American Negro college students from urban backgrounds is probably less known. I can speak with personal authority about this tradition since I am what folklorist might call "an active participant" in it. My urban friends and relatives are the people with whom I exchanged such stories as those given here.

Such an exchange has been going on since I was a child. It was an accepted amusement then. It was not until last year (Spring of 1957) when I took a folklore course at Blackburn College in Carlinville, Illinois,¹ that I realized not only that such stories are folktales, but also that other people besides Negroes are interested in Negro folktales.

One or two of the stories that I give here were included in a report I made for a course in American literature. Another half dozen were collected as part of my folklore course work. The remainder have been recorded since that time. All the folktales in this collection were heard from Negroes of urban background who have spent little or no time in rural areas.

My collecting was done in two places. The first of these places was Memphis, Tennessee, where I have lived since I was five years old. The first two stories have been written from memory. The first one I heard several times when I was about eight years old. (I have given more detailed explanations with the stories.) Another four were recorded from my brother's dictation in Memphis during 1957 and 1958. My brother is one of the few people who is not suspicious of my reason for wanting to write the stories down word for word as he tells them to me. Since he attends college in Holly Springs, Mississippi, he was able to give me not only stories he had heard in Memphis, but also others learned from some of his college friends who come from various southern states.

The second of the places where I have collected stories was Blackburn College. At Blackburn, I secured examples of Negro folktales from two southern states, Virginia and Alabama. The stories from my college friends took quite a bit more effort to collect than those I got in Memphis. When I tried to record tales from my fellow students, I faced several problems. Apart from the fact that there are only about fifteen American-born Negroes in the student body, just seven of them (including me) could ever think of

1. Dr. Herbert Halpert, the teacher of the course, encouraged me to do further collecting and helped me with the wording of this introduction.

any stories. As far as I have observed, however, storytelling is not as popular a pastime with students at Blackburn as it is at the three all-Negro colleges that I have visited in Tennessee and Mississippi.

I soon learned that collecting from my friends was not as easy as collecting from my brother. Although I had been warned by my folklore teacher that a direct request was not always the best way to start collecting, I thought that applied only when collecting from strangers, not from friends. But my question--"Do you know any stories? I'm collecting them"--got positive results only from one very close friend. She, like my brother, not only told me the few stories she knew, but was also willing to let me take notes as she talked and would repeat phrases whenever necessary.

From my other friends the answer was, "I can't think of any right now." For some reason most students were reluctant to have me write stories down as they told them. I had tried to explain that my collecting was only for a class report, but they acted as if they thought I was holding out on them in some way.

Finally I found a method to get stories even after I had been given the "brush-off" in this way many times. After such a refusal, I would drop the subject. On another occasion I would casually tell a story to entertain a group in which one of these "I-can't-think-of-any" people was present. One fellow, who on several occasions previously had been unable to think of a story, would immediately try to match me. Unfortunately, I could not record verbatim the stories told in such a situation. I would go to my room later and write down as much of the story as I could remember. (I can usually remember humorous stories quite well.) But if there was a section or some phrase which I could not remember exactly, I would wait until I could get the story-teller in another group and say, "Remember that story you told about the preacher? I know (pointing to another friend) she'd like it." Since I know what kinds of stories my various friends like, I was usually safe in making such a statement. In that way I could get my unsuspecting informant to retell the story at different times until I was sure I had it recorded in his own words.

My best story-tellers seemed to tell a particular story in the same way each time, just as an actor, when he repeats his lines at different performances, uses each time much the same facial expressions, patterns of speech and gestures. Good story-tellers apparently have carefully worked out and memorized the best way to tell each story. The telling of each story is a performance.²

Most of these stories were told with a conscious exaggeration of the phrasing and pronunciation of an uneducated southern rural Negro. Even if the narrator of a story is an educated person, he is expected to use this special, humorously exaggerated dialect where it is needed in his story. At times, the humor in the story may be chiefly in the use of dialect rather than in the plot. Of course, the telling must also be dramatic, with the proper intonation and gestures. The more the use of this dialect contrasts with the

2. This observation was brought to my attention by Dr. Herbert Halpert.

way the story-teller usually speaks, the more his audience enjoys the performance.

The fact that these stories were told by college students from urban tradition is worth re-emphasizing. A college student who has always lived in a city has probably had contact with people who originally come from a variety of backgrounds: rural areas, small towns, and different cities in the same or other states. Since the college students who told me these stories come from such urban backgrounds, but from several different states, the stories given here probably represent a partial cross-section of American Negro story-telling traditions.³

In a few of the stories following, I name the informants. Others requested that I omit their names. Geographically, the stories come from the following areas. Numbers 3, 5, 8, and 9 are from my brother, Raymond Jones, who learned them in Holly Springs, Mississippi; number 4 from Leon Chestang, a Blackburn College student from Mobile, Alabama; number 7 from a Blackburn College student who lives in Lynchburg, Virginia; number 6 from a Blackburn College student who lives in South Norfolk, Virginia; numbers 1, 2, and 10 from my own memory (Memphis, Tennessee).

1

When I was between seven and twelve years old, gatherings with my playmates on the steps of my front porch during the summer were usually ended by telling stories. My playmates included most of the neighborhood children; their ages ranged from six up to about fourteen years old. We always managed to get together after supper. The "dusk-darkness" set the mood for storytelling--and finally for our favorite story. Some of the children would bring their little brothers and sisters along with them. The babies were passed from lap to lap during the story-telling. Some were old enough to know only that they were expected to sit still.

We had our favorite story-teller for our favorite story. He was about ten years old. Dressed only in short khaki pants, the slender little figure would jump to the foot of the steps in his bare feet and look up at us. Before he started to tell the story, we tried to make sure that there was someone in the crowd who had never heard the story before. While one other person slipped behind the tree (very slowly when no one was watching), the boy would begin.

"JOHNNY AND THE DEAD MAN'S LIVER"⁴

"Once there wuz a boy named Johnny. One day his mamma sent 'im to the store to git a pound of liver fuh supper. She gave 'im fifteen cents and he went on. On the way, Johnny saw a dead mane /man/ laying in the street, so Johnny tuck /took/ 'is knife

4. This is the title we always gave it. All other titles in this article have been supplied.

and cut the dead mane's liver out and wrapped it up and tuck it home to 'is mamma. Johnny kept the money and spent it.

"That night, Johnny wuz in the bed and he heard somebody call 'im. They said, / this repeated sentence is chanted / 'Johnny, Johnny, I wont / want / my liver! Johnny, Johnny, I wont my liver!'"

At this point the storyteller would "buck his eyes" (open them very wide), hold his hands in a clutch-like position at about shoulder height, and turn slowly while looking from person to person. This was to get all of us in a scary mood before the end of the story.

"'Johnny, Johnny, I wont my liver!' So Johnny got sked / scared / 'cause he knewed that he had et the liver, but the dead mane came right straight at Johnny. The dead mane had got to where Johnny wuz now and he wuz standin' over Johnny's bed. He looked at Johnny and said, 'Johnny, Johnny, I GOTCHA!'" / The "GOTCHA" is shouted. /

As the boy said, "I GOTCHA," the person who had slipped behind the tree during the telling of the story would pounce out upon the person in the crowd who had never heard the story before. If no unsuspecting victim was there, he could jump toward any one of us and get the same result; such a loud screaming that somebody's mother would rush out to see what was happening.

2

When I was in high school in Memphis, Tennessee, the principal of the school used to sit in on some of the classes to observe. One day he came into our classroom while we were having spelling lessons. He began to ask some of us to define words that were in the lesson. Everybody defined the words correctly until he asked one girl to define the word "deficit." She didn't know the meaning of the word.

It seemed to upset the principal very much to see a girl in high school who couldn't define "deficit." After having asked someone else in the class to define the word for her, he began to recite this story to us. Before he began telling it, he assured us that he knew the exact street in Memphis on which the events took place. (He even gave us directions for getting there.)

ACQUITTED

"I'm sure that you all know where Bellevue and Watkins is. Well, one night the people of that community reported a terrible disturbance. An old Negro man who did yard work for the people in that community had been seen going down the street carrying a crocker sack / burlap bag / full of chickens. The man's name was John. The people had found out that John was stealing the chickens from somebody's henhouse.

"John was reported for stealing the chickens and he had to go to court to settle the matter. Everyone knew that John had stolen the chickens but they couldn't prove it. No one had any evidence against John. Due to this lack of evidence, the judge had no alternative, and said to John, 'John, the court acquits you.'

" 'Suh?' said John.

" 'John, I said that the court acquits you.'

"John looked up at the judge and said, 'Do that mean that I got to give them chicken back?'

"After that, the judge also knew that John really had stolen the chickens because he had given himself away by not knowing the meaning of acquit. The point of this story is to make you see that you must learn the meaning of these words or you'll end up like John."

The class laughed at the story for the sake of courtesy.

3

I heard my brother complain about the mosquitoes in Holly Springs, Mississippi, where he attends college. During the Christmas holidays of 1956, I happened to be interested in collecting some of the tales about mosquitoes. I asked him very casually, "How about the mosquitoes in Holly Springs last summer? Were there very many of them

He told me this story in a mixture of backwoods dialect and musician's jargon. (He plays in the college dance band.) He was probably unconscious of the fact that he was using either speech pattern. For him, story-telling and change of speech automatically go together. This is why the mosquitoes are called "cats" in the story.

THE BIG MOSQUITOES

"I was sleeping one night when a loud noise at my door woke me up. It was somebody knocking and telling me to let them in because they wanted something to eat. Well, I thought that it was some guys from down the hall. I was so sleepy I just hollered out there, 'Say man, get your hungry self away from that door!' But I saw they didn't go. Instead, they started pushing on the door and talking loud. The voices I heard out there did sound kind of strange, but that didn't bother me much.

"Finally they broke on in. It was two great big mosquitoes. I had always heard that if you carry a lighted torch, mosquitoes won't bite you. When I saw those two cats walk over there and stand over my bed, I decided to find out if there was any truth to what I had heard. I said to them, 'Say man, is it true that if I light a torch and carry it, you can't bite me?'

"'That depends on how fast you carry that torch, Jack.' That's what they told me.

"Well, they drug me off the bed. I heard one of them say real low, 'Man do you think we should eat this cat here, or take him down to the field and eat him?'

"'I think you must be crazy! You know as well as I do that if we take him to the field, that them big mosquitoes will take him away from us!'"

4

This story was told to me by a Blackburn student from Mobile, Alabama. In the dialect used in the story, "Mississippi" becomes shortened to "Miss'ippi" and is pronounced as if it were the name of a person.

DROPPING ALL TITLES

"It seems that Charley, who lived in Mississippi, decided to move to Chicago. Charley had been calling white people 'Miss' and 'Mr.' all his life. He decided that once he got to Chicago he would never use those two words again.

"Charley found a job when he arrived in Chicago. His boss was very friendly toward him and liked him very much. Charley came to work the first morning and said to the boss, 'Good mo'nin' Bob! How is Mary!?' Charley's boss looked at him in a very surprised way and said, 'Charley, it's still Mr. Robert. My wife's name is Mrs. Mary.'

"Charley didn't like this at all and he said, 'Lissen, since I lef' home I ain't callin' nobody Miss. I don't eb'm Miss Miss'ippi no mo'. It's jest 'Sippi.'"

5

It is sometimes assumed that a Negro handyman, like Sam in this story, can fix anything around the house.

FIX IT

"Sam was a handy-man around this particularly household, and whenever any kind of little gadget wouldn't work properly his boss would say, 'Sam, fix it.' Of course Sam never failed to fix anything and his boss thought that he could depend on Sam regardless of the circumstances. Sam's boss even got a new car and whenever something went wrong with the car he would say, 'Sam, get out and fix it.' Sam always fixed it.

"Things went on like that for some time and Sam was proud of his position until his boss bought a brand-new airplane. His boss wanted to give him a ride in his new

airplane but Sam absolutely refused to get in. There was nothing that they could do for Sam to get him to go up for a ride.

"Sam happened to be telling one of his friends about this, and his friend, naturally, also wanted to know why Sam wouldn't go for a ride in the airplane. Sam said, 'I know the minute dat we gits up dere, and somethin' ain't actin' right, he's gonna say, 'Sam, git out and fix it,' and I ain't gonna do it.'"

6

Anti-racial folktales and jokes among Negroes, as well as among other races, are very often those which ridicule the race of the story-teller. I heard this one told one night when about six of my friends and I (all between the ages of eighteen and twenty-one) were sitting around telling jokes. Everyone thought that this was one of the best ones of the night.

THE TEST

"This incident occurred in the South. There was a men's club which was supposedly an all-white organization. The rumor had gotten around to all of the members and to the president as well that there was a Negro in the club who was trying to 'pass.' The president tried everything that he had heard on detecting Negroes. The members all joined in with him. They started asking each other questions. Each one was getting more suspicious of the other, but they had no success.

"Finally the time came when everyone gave up hope of finding the Negro. Either the rumor was a lie, or the Negro was doing a pretty darned good job of passing. The club had its regular meeting one night. At the end of the business discussion the president was discussing the agenda for the next meeting. Some of the business was to get a new way to find that Negro. He wanted all of the members to be there to contribute, so he stood up and asked each one individually.

"'Thomas, will you be here?'

"'Yes. I'll be here.'

"'Fred, how about you?'

"'Yes.'

"'Smith?'

"'Certainly!'

"Williams?"

"Yes, I'll be here."

"John, will you be here?"

"John was a devout member and there was no doubt that he would be there, but when he was asked, he said, 'If the Lord spares me and nothing happens, I'll sure be here.'

"After John said that, everybody knew that the search was over. John was the Negro. Nobody would talk like that but a Negro."

Most people have their own ideas about the origin of particular things. This story was told to me by a twenty-year-old resident of Lynchburg, Virginia. It is supposed to explain why they put back doors in churches. Jeanette Morris, my informant, told me this story one afternoon while she was in my room. I wrote it down about fifteen minutes after she left, using the notes that I had taken while she was telling the story.

THE STRAP GOT LOOSE

"There was a very old man once who had a very large hump in his back. He got sick and later died. When he died, the hump was so large that he had to be strapped to the casket in order to get him to lie down straight."

"When they had the funeral, they had the casket brought in. On the way, the body had gotten a little shaken up and the straps that were used to hold the body down had gotten loose. When the preacher got up to preach the funeral the straps got a little too loose and the body sprung straight up. Everybody in the church got scared. Some of the ladies screamed. The preacher wanted to run but he couldn't get near the door because the other people had already thought of the idea. None of the people knew what had happened to make the man sit up in the casket like that."

"The preacher just stood there sweating. He looked at the dead man and looked to the back of the church and said, 'Damn these churches with no back doors!'

"Ever since then, they have been making back doors to churches."

Some of the stories that circulate about preachers are to the effect that preachers preach on Sundays but have their own vices during the week. All the stories of this kind that I have heard were told about rural preachers. My brother claims that an old Negro woman from Mississippi told him this story "just as it happened."

YOU BELONG UP HERE

"I wuz in church one Sunday when Reb'm 'cided to kinda 'vide the folks up--you know how it gits sometimes--and see jest who wuz de sinners and who wuz de saints. He stood 'fo de pulpit and he sez, 'I wonts wants all de backsliders to de back uv de church! Den I wonts all de liars to de lef uv de church! I wonts all de backbiters to de right side! Den I wonts you drunks to de front!'

"After Reb'm finish talkin', he looked out dere and he see de deacon still settin' down. Well, Reb'm 'cided he better see what wuz wrong. He say, 'Deacon, why ain't you in one o' dese heah groups?'

"Deacon looks at Reb'm rat smack in his eyes an' he sez to Reb'm he sez, 'Well, I tells ya, Preacha; you ain't called out nothin' that I is yit, an' I'm jest settin' heah 'tel you do.'

"Reb'm didn't see no need a doin' dat, so he sez to de deacon, 'Tell me, Deacon, jest what is you, den?'

"Deacon sez to Reb'm, 'I tells ya, Preacha; I'm a bootlegger.'

"Reb'm tol him, 'Well you blongst up heah wid me.'"

9

This is one of the stories that I think may have become a Negro folktale only when it was told in Negro dialect. I heard it told as a Negro folktale because other tales were being told at that time.

FINDING THE WAY

"There was a preacher who was walking down the street one day when he spied two young boys on the curb. Not knowing what they were doing there, he approached them with the intention of getting directions to the nearest post office. After he had gotten close to the boys and had asked them for directions, he saw that they were happily engaged in a game of dice. Such a sinful thing for boys so young! he thought. He said, 'Boys, ya'll ain't nevah gittin' t' heab'm lak dat. How ya'll spect t' find heab'm shootin' dice?'

"One of the boys answered, 'How you 'spect t' fin' heab'm yo self if you can't eb'm fin' the post office?'

"With this, the preacher said no more, but walked away."

I remember hearing this story in Memphis about three years ago. Two people were talking about sermons being written and one of the people didn't like the idea of ministers using written sermons. The other person said that most people wouldn't know whether or not a sermon had been written unless they had been told. He told this story to prove his point.

THE SERMON ON THE WALL

"There was a pastor of a little country church who always read all of his sermons. His congregation objected to the written sermons. They all thought that if God had 'called' him to preach, all he had to do was 'open his mouth and let the Lord take over.'

"One Sunday the preacher had his written sermon before him and was standing before the congregation. It was customary for the preacher to pray before each sermon, so he asked the people to all bow their heads. While the people had their heads bowed, a strong breeze came through and swept the preacher's sermon away. The sermon landed between the walls near one of the windows where repairs were being made on the building.

"Each person raised his head and opened his eyes after the prayer was finished. The people sat there waiting to hear the sermon while the preacher stood before them with a rather perplexed look on his face. He glanced over to the side of the church where he saw the edge of his sermon waving in the breeze. He was suspicious of what had happened and said, 'People, I've got a feeling that God has put the best d--n sermon you've ever heard between these walls here today!'

"He walked over to the wall and took the sermon out and read it. That day the people all got happy. Everybody thought that the preacher was getting his sermons from some mysterious source. Every Sunday he would plant his sermons in the same spot in the wall before service began. When the people all got there, he would walk over to get his sermon and deliver it to the people. They never complained about written sermons anymore."

EVENTS AND COMMENTS

A NEW FOLKLORE SOCIETY is being organized in the state of Maine. Headquarters will be at the State University, Orono, Maine. This news is relayed through The Potash Kettle, the publication of the Green Mountain Folklore Society.

FOLKWAYS RECORDS AND SERVICE CORPORATION, 117 W. 46th Street, New York 36, N. Y., announces the publication of an album of Ohio State Ballads sung by Anne Grimes with dulcimer accompaniment. The long-playing disc recording twenty songs is Folkways Album FH5217. It may be purchased for \$5.95. Mrs. Grimes is a member of the TFS, and was a highly appreciated contributor to our annual meeting some five years ago.

NIPPY AND THE YANKEE DOODLE is the title of a booklet containing ten folktales and eight riddles collected in the southern mountain region by Leonard Roberts. The booklet, which sells for 50 cents, may be obtained from the publishers, The Council of the Southern Mountains, Box 2000, College Station, Berea, Kentucky.

THE SECOND ISSUE OF THE ARCHIVIST, a publication of Folklore Archives and the Archives of Folk and Primitive Music, Indiana University, contains bibliographical notes and brief articles on such matters as "Problems of Archives," college songs, and the history of the cylinder phonograph. The Archivist, which is distributed gratis to those who ask for it, will certainly be an indispensable item in the files of scholars in the fields of folklore and folk music. Requests should be addressed to the editor, George List, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana.

THE SWEDISH FOLK ART of lace making is featured in Vol. 41, No. 1 (1958) of Rig.

"PUERTO RICAN CHILDREN'S SONGS IN NEW YORK" are reported by Shulamith Rybak in the Spring, 1958, issue of Midwest Folklore. The same issue reports "West Virginia Ghost Stories," collected by Ruth Ann Musick and "Five Ghost Tales from Boyle County, Kentucky," collected by Ethel Owens.

POLISH FOLKLORE (June, 1958) announces a conference on Polish and other folklore to be held at Alliance College on October 9, 10, and 11.

A COLLECTION OF TWENTY-THREE ANECDOTES, most of them from Knott County, Kentucky, is presented by Josiah H. Combs in the April-June, 1958, Kentucky Folklore Record. The same issue contains an article by Yandell Collins, Jr., on "Superstitions and Belief Tales from Louisville."

COLLECTORS OF FRIENDSHIP VERSES will certainly want to see the "Old Autograph Album Issue" of West Virginia Folklore (Winter, 1958). The Fall, 1957, issue of the same publication offers a group of three "Italian Tales Told in Shinnston," contributed by Melia Rose Maiolo.

John T. Flanagan and Arthur Palmer Hudson, Folklore in American Literature. Evanston, Illinois: Row, Peterson and Company, 1958. \$7.00.

Folklore in American Literature, an anthology compiled by John T. Flanagan of the University of Illinois and Arthur Palmer Hudson of the University of North Carolina, meets a definite need in both American literature and in American folklore. Too often the teacher of either of those subjects finds himself vaguely pointing out that there is a great deal of folklore in American literature without having a specific text to which he can direct his students. This handsomely-mounted text seems to be aiming both at that larger market of popular folklore anthologies and at the college and university trade. While, therefore, not a scholarly book in the strictest sense, the book strongly indicates the authors' command of the field of folklore scholarship in its astute headnotes, bibliography, and cross references.

There is no clearcut pattern of organization in the anthology. In their introduction the editors stress the approach by occupations and by geographical centers. The actual chapter headings, however, might be rearranged in this manner: I. Races (Indian, Negro), II. Supernaturalism (devil tales, ghost tales, witchcraft and superstitions), III. Adventures (buried treasure), IV. Heroes and demigods, V, Types (tall tale, literary ballad, folksongs and ballads, proverbs, and wise sayings).

The avowed purpose of the book is "to illustrate by representative selections of prose and verse the artistic use of folklore by American authors." The editors opine that because pure folklore "lacks artistry and often subtlety it is less important as literature than as the revelation of popular mores at an untutored level." Disregarding the obvious "Them's fightin' words" reaction of many folklorists to such a statement, one might say that the selections in this book do not prove that thesis very convincingly. Instead they emphasize the sad truth that American literature lacks the richness of German and British literature in its folklore content.

The anthology is somewhat heavily weighted with selections from nineteenth century literary figures of varying merits: Irving, Lydia H. Sigourney, Hawthorne, Longfellow, Whittier, Lowell, Poe, Whitman, Lanier, Irwin Russell, and Lafcadio Hearn. Among the writers of this century are Joaquin Miller, Frost, Lindsay, Sandburg, Stephen Vincent Benet, Faulkner, John Crowe Ransom, Julia Peterkin, and Elizabeth Maddox Roberts. A few other lesser-known writers also appear.

Among the purer folklorists represented are Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, J. Frank Dobie, Vance Randolph, and Zora Neale Hurston. Somewhere between these two groups are such native American humorists as Mark Twain, Longstreet, Thorpe, George W. Harris, Hooper, Seba Smith, and Kin Hubbard; also there are such local color writers as Joel Chandler Harris, Rowland E. Robinson (creator of the Yankee Uncle Lisha), and Roark Bradford.

The folk heroes chosen for this volume are Paul Bunyan, John Henry, John Brown, Davy Crockett, Andrew Jackson, Johnny Appleseed, and William Jennings Bryan. The folksongs, twelve in all, are mostly broadside ballads about murders, disasters, and battles. Among the sources for these songs are Professor Hudson's own collection of Mississippi songs, the Frank C. Brown North Carolina collection, and Lomax's Cowboy Songs and Other Frontier Ballads.

Folklore in American Literature does not adhere strictly to established systems of classification, such as the Aarne-Thompson and Child canons, but the headnotes often refer to types and motifs: the journey of the soul into another world, the transformation of human beings into birds or beasts, the bargain between a man and the devil, the devil's helplessness when confronted with Holy Scriptures, and the like. As in most folklore anthologies, the types of folklore best represented are the tale, song, belief, proverb, and custom. Among the more interesting selections are two plays: Percy MacKaye's The Scarecrow, based on Hawthorne's story "Feathertop," and Paul Green's humorous play about a revival in a North Carolina farm region, "Unto Such Glory." The book offers ample material for the student to make his own analyses and classifications.

--James H. Penrod
Troy State College
Troy, Alabama

José María Arguedas, The Singing Mountaineers (Songs and Tales of the Quechua People). Austin, University of Texas Press, 1957. \$3.75.

The Singing Mountaineers, collected by José María Arguedas, translated by Ruth Stephan, and illustrated by Donald Weismann, is one of the purest collections of folklore which has come to our attention--pure in the sense that these people of the Peruvian Andes have lived and perpetuated by their own choice these oral traditions from the earliest known time to the present day. Knowledge of letters was lost to Peru for a period of four hundred years by choice of the people and their leaders.

Singing and dancing are the outlets of expression for their varied occasions and moods. The songs, because of their oral tradition, are snappily short and lively. Their ballads express greatness of courage, skill, valor, clemency, prudence. Their songs and dances are accompanied by drums, flutes, gongs, clappers, seed rattles and "whatever the people of each province had brought."

Any event in the lives of the people or the nation calls for some form of celebration. Hence, their songs and dances are original, spontaneous, and creative. They are highly rhythmical, positive, and forceful. Nor do all their songs require words, since they find their expression too in the cadences of body movements. They "move in unison, leaning on their tools, pushing, digging, to the rhythm of their song. And their work is done with amazing quickness." Their grain is threshed by tramping it by foot, and the threshing provides one of the chief fiestas of harvesting.

The Andean tales are similarly unique since their purpose is to teach some moral of health, sobriety, or government, and since, too, there are no social lines to be drawn as between the high and the low, the rich and the poor. "There is no double thinking." These tales or stories are usually animalistic and are best illustrated in the collection known as the Quechua Tales where a leading character in the tale is a Mr. Condor, an Emerald Hummingbird, or "The Snake's Sweetheart."

This survival of ancient Peruvian culture is therefore significant and profound. They maintain the same air of sincerity whether these Quechua people sing funeral songs or songs in preparation for the receiving of the rain. The threshing songs are worthy examples of the folk poetry of the Indian region of Peru. Today with the building of a railroad into the northern Andean region there is a noticeable assimilation to other cultures beginning to take place.

-E. G. Rogers
Tennessee Wesleyan College

W. Edson Richmond, ed., Studies in Folklore. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1957. 270 pp. \$5.00.

It was fitting that the University of Indiana should issue a volume of folklore studies "in honor of Distinguished Service Professor Stith Thompson." It is fitting that the volume should open with a sketch of professor Thompson's scholarly career, prepared by the editor. In view of Professor Thompson's varied, world-wide interests in a multiplicity of aspects of folklore, it is perhaps fitting that the homage offered him should take the form of a miscellany gathered from scholars in Denmark, Norway, Canada, and Ireland as well as in the United States. Yet, like many another festschrift, this volume has something of the character of a scholarly grab-bag. No discoverable theme or subject limitation (except the very broadest definition of folklore) holds the seventeen contributions together. The essays range from the dullest typology to fairly off-hand and tentative collections of notes; they include a number of studies that specialists in certain areas will not want to miss, and a few that even the unscholarly reader would enjoy. An adequate review would of necessity deal with each essay separately.

Since space limitation prevents such an adequate review, it may be useful simply to indicate what the essays deal with, grouping them roughly into six categories.

The first five studies have to do with folk tales and myths. Laurits Bødker makes a detailed, analytical report on "The Brave Tailor in Danish Tradition"; Reidar Th. Christiansen presents notes on "The Sisters and the Troll"; MacEdward Leach offers, with brief comments, a collection of "Celtic Tales from Cape Breton"; Joseph Szovérffy contributes a translation and study of a medieval story in a modern Irish version that he calls "The Straight Road" (Thompson Motif Q 172.1); and Erminie Wheeler-Vogelin collaborates with Remedios W. Moore in a study of the character and distribution of "The Emergence Myth in Native North America."

Folk customs are the subject of Seán Ó Súdleabhaín's report on "The Feast of Saint Marin in Ireland" and Wayland D. Hand's notes on "American Analogues of the Couvade." Proverbial lore is represented by Archer Taylor's extractions from Edward Eggleston's Hoosier Schoolmaster. Studies of individual folksongs are W. Edson Richmond's "Some Norwegian Contributions to a Danish Ballad" and Francis Lee Utley's tracing of the backgrounds of "Abraham Lincoln's 'When Adam Was Created.'"

Scholarly methods and principles classification are the concern of William Hugh Jansen's discussion of "Performance in . . . Verbal Folklore," Thomas A. Sebeok's essay, "Toward a Statistical Contingency Method in Folklore Research," C. F. Vogelin and John Yegerlehner's exploration of a "Definition of Formal Style, with Examples from Shawnee," and Samuel P. Bayard's "Miscellany of Tune Notes."

Finally, and inevitably, we must resort to a "Miscellaenous" category. Richard M. Dorson makes a biographical report on "Hugh Miller, Pioneer Scottish Folklorist." Warren E. Roberts discusses "Folklore in the Novels of Thomas Deloney." Nils Lid presents a general account of "The Paganism of the Norsemen."

It is to be hoped that the useful articles in this volume will not be irremediably interred therein.

--W. J. G.

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